

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



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QUALITY ASSURANCE DIVISION CERTIFICATION AND LICENSING BUREAUS PROVIDER INFORMATION NOTICE - #050110

REMODELING AND CONSTRUCTION IN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

The DPHHS QAD Certification Bureau has issued the following information in conjunction with the Licensure Bureau. This guidance is for health care facilities that are certified (e.g. hospital, critical access hospitals, nursing homes, ambulatory surgery centers, end stage renal dialysis facilities) and are planning construction projects while residents or patients are still occupying areas of the facility. Construction may include large projects such as new additions, remodels, and simple remodels of existing facilities. All proposed changes to facilities should be sent to Joe Merrill, Construction Consultant, at DPHHS Quality Assurance Division, 2401 Colonial Drive, and Helena MT 59620. Minor changes do not have to be full architectural/engineering drawings, but must include a sketch of the current floor plan with changes noted.

Life safety code compliance during construction should include consideration of maintaining fire sprinkler systems, smoke detectors, exiting, smoke compartment requirements, etc. Re-certification surveys occur as required by federal requirements regardless of whether a facility is under construction or not.

Keep the following items in mind while under construction:

- All ceiling tiles shall be replaced after each day or a 24 hour / 7 days a week fire watch will need to be imposed until construction is complete.
- Temporary walls shall be made of non combustible or limited combustible materials that are the same rating as the wall they are temporarily replacing. An example would be sheet rock wall replacing a one hour wall will have to be one hour rated as well.
- Temporary enclosures shall be made of noncombustible panels or flame resistant tarpaulins and should meet NFPA 701. These temporary enclosures shall include a fire extinguisher equivalent to all classes of fires that could be expected.
- If construction involves closing off of required exits; temporary exit signage shall be used to redirect residents, patients, staff, and public to alternative routes.
- Temporary provisions made in the facility shall be maintained 24 hours/ 7 days a week until construction is complete.
- Train staff during the construction phase to include fire drills and temporary evacuation routes.
- Hot work such as torch cutting, welding, spark generating grinding, etc. requires a fire watch for the immediate area by construction staff.
- If proposed work will affect the emergency power circuits or the generator, a back-up generator may be required.
- Contact DPHHS Life Safety Code Supervisor at 406-444-4170 when the fire sprinkler and/or fire alarm system is down for more than 4 hours in a 24 hour period. A fire watch is required after this report is made and must continue until service is restored.

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